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Sweden

Fishery Products

Swedish Press Reports on Toxins in Farmed Salmon- A market Opportunity for U.S. Wild Fish?

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Approved by:

Lana Bennett
U.S. Embassy, Sweden

Prepared by:

Asa Lexmon

Report Highlights:

The findings of U.S. scientists regarding high levels of cancer-causing toxins in farmed salmon have been extensively reported in Swedish media. This development may increase interest in U.S. wild fish- especially salmon.

Includes PSD Changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
Unscheduled Report
Stockholm [SW1]
[SW]

The findings of U.S. scientists at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee on high levels of cancer-causing toxins in farmed salmon have been extensively reported in Swedish media. Media reports discussed findings that farmed salmon from Europe and North America contain significantly higher levels of PCB and other toxins than wild salmon from the Pacific Ocean. Press reports also pointed out that farmed salmon from Norway and other European countries had higher levels of toxins than farmed salmon from North America. The advice of the U.S. scientists against eating farmed salmon more than once a month made it to Swedish press headlines.

This development exacerbates existing concerns among this fish-loving population on food safety and fish. In Sweden, the concern has heretofore been with high levels of dioxin in wild fish from the Baltic Sea. For many species, these are much higher than the EU's thresholds that were set in 2001. Fish exceeding these thresholds cannot be sold for human consumption in any of the EU member states, with the exception of Sweden and Finland. Until December 31, 2006, fish with dioxin levels exceeding the EU's thresholds may be sold in Sweden and Finland, under the condition that they are not exported to other EU countries. The Commission based its decision to exempt Sweden on the Swedish National Food Administration's (NFA) argument that health benefits of lower thresholds do not exceed the lost benefits of eating fish. Because toxin levels in farmed salmon are within the EU's thresholds, the NFA considers the high levels of dioxin in fish from the Baltic Sea to be a more acute problem, and does not intend to change its dietary guidelines with regard to farmed salmon.

In Sweden, salmon consumption is relatively high at 2 kg per capita annually and nearly all of the salmon consumed is farmed salmon from Norway. Since Swedes are a very health-conscious population, the news of additional findings of toxins in fish is most un-welcomed news. This, along with the weaker U.S. dollar, points to growing opportunities for U.S. wild fish, especially salmon.